Why Lots of Loving Words Help Your Baby Grow and Thrive
Parents are a baby’s first and best teachers

All parents want the best for their baby. And we know healthy food helps grow a healthy baby. But to grow a healthy brain, babies need more. Babies need lots of loving words.

**TALK** — Talk with your baby during everyday activities such as bathtime, mealtime, when changing diapers and going for walks.

**READ** — Read with your baby every day, and point out images and colors, make facial expressions and ask questions.

**SING** — Sing your favorite lullaby’s or songs you remember as a way to calm a crying baby.

**PLAY** — Engage with your baby every chance you have and create happy, lifetime bonds.

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**Note for Educator:** Most parents may already talk with their baby, however parents may not be aware of why it is so important to talk with their baby, especially during the first three years, and how talking stimulates brain development and provides the critical foundation for literacy and learning.
PARENTS ARE A BABY’S 1ST AND BEST TEACHERS

TALK
READ
SING
PLAY
A baby’s brain grows 80% in the first 18 months

Brain growth is measured by the number of cells and the amount of connections that are between the cells. We can think of those connections as the ‘wiring’ that allows the cells to talk to one another. This wiring plays a really important role in how your baby grows and learns, both today and later in life.

**Ask:** Is there anything you can do to help the wiring in your baby’s brain get stronger and healthier?

**Answer:** YES! And the best part is: it doesn’t take special equipment, fancy toys or complicated treatments and everyone can help.

Talk with your baby early and often. The words she hears from you and the rest of the people around her help her brain make new and stronger connections. Every word counts.
A baby’s brain grows 80% in the first 18 months.
Early language exposure enhances vocabulary and academic performance

Research shows that the number of loving words a baby hears in the first three years of life is the best predictor of success in school and in life.

**Large Vocabulary**
Babies who hear more words have a high listening vocabulary by age 3. Having a strong vocabulary helps her use words to express her feelings when she gets frustrated.

**Ready for School**
And a strong vocabulary means she is will be ready for kindergarten and be on track to learn how to read by the end of third grade.
EARLY LANGUAGE EXPOSURE ENHANCES VOCABULARY AND ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

- ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE
- SCHOOL READINESS
- VOCABULARY SKILLS
- CRITICAL BRAIN DEVELOPMENT
- EARLY LANGUAGE EXPOSURE
The ability to read by third grade is a powerful indicator for future academic success, high school graduation, and life stability.

Third grade marks a critical time when children shift from learning to read to reading to learn.

However, children who cannot read by the end of third grade cannot make this expected shift. It becomes more difficult for them to follow instructions, learn new concepts and complete homework. School stops being fun. And as a result, these children fall even further behind in school than children who can read.

High School Graduation = Life Stability

Kids who can’t read by the end of third grade are four times more likely to drop out of high school. And it gets worse. Kids who don’t finish high school are more likely to have poor health, lower wages, be unemployed and be arrested.
THIRD GRADE READING MATTERS

FROM LEARNING TO READ  TO LEARNING TO READ

2 out of 3 kids are not reading proficiently by the end of 3rd grade
Research shows that the number of loving words a baby hears in the first three years of life is the best predictor of success in school and in life. Therefore, the most effective action parents can take to increase their baby’s educational success and opportunities in life is to talk with their baby. Early and often.

Ask these questions:

- Did you know how important it is to talk with your baby?
- When do you enjoy talking with your baby?
- What would help you talk with your baby more?
The most effective action parents can take to increase their baby’s educational success and opportunities in life is to **TALK WITH THEIR BABY.**
You already talk with your baby. Here are ways to add even more words to your daily routine.

Babies respond best to lots of loving words, including words of encouragement, praise and questions.

GREETINGS — Greet your baby with a smile, hug and high pitch tone.

NARRATE ACTIONS — When cooking, washing, cleaning, describe what you’re doing.

DIRECT ATTENTION — Engaging your baby helps form new connections in her brain.

TELL STORIES — Babies are never too young to hear your stories, and everyone can help.

ASK QUESTIONS — Encourage your baby to respond by asking questions and pausing.

SOOTHE — Calm your baby by talking or singing

Avoid using directives such as “No, Stop, Be quiet” and instead use positive words and speak in a happy voice.
WAYS TO TALK WITH YOUR BABY

Greetings
Narrate Actions
Direct Attention

Tell Stories
Ask Questions
Soothe
Parentese is a unique approach to speaking that serves to get and keep the baby’s attention.

How to Speak Parentese

Speak in a melodic tone and use a higher pitch than when you normally speak.

Use short, simple sentences, with well-formed, elongated consonants and vowels.

Ask these Questions:

• How do you usually talk with your baby?
• Do you notice a difference when you speak to your baby using Parentese?
• Can you demonstrate how you talk with your baby?
HOW TO SPEAK IN PARENTÈSE

- Higher Pitch
- Short, Simple, Repeated
- Long Vowels
- Singing Voice
- Happy Expressions
- Correct Grammar
Make your baby your conversational partner

Serve and Return

Babies are learning how to communicate from the moment they are born. Encourage your baby to respond by asking your baby questions and then pausing before continuing, to allow time for the baby to respond, either vocally or through social communication.

This back and forth interaction will advance your baby’s language acquisition and teach them how conversation works.

Ask this question:

• What conversations do you enjoy having with your baby?
THE POWER OF CONVERSATIONS

YOU SAY

I ASK
Babies are the best at learning languages

Use your home language

Infants have the innate capacity to learn more than one language, and quickly.

Learning more than one language has many benefits for brain development.

And language exchanges are richest in the language that the parents are most comfortable speaking.

This means it is important to speak in the home language at home — even if it is different than the language spoken at school — so that interactions between the baby and parent are rich in vocabulary and allows for a strong bond between parent and child.

DUAL LANGUAGE LEARNERS

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ANY QUESTIONS?